

a What is Claimed Is:
~~CLAIMS~~

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1. A method of signalling in a communications system comprising a Call Control level and a Bearer Control level, where the Call Control level comprises a plurality of Media Gateway Controllers and the Bearer Control level comprises a plurality of Media Gateways each of which is controlled by a Media Gateway Controller, the method comprising allocating to each Media Gateway at least one address, which address corresponds to one of a plurality of different addressing formats, and conveying these addresses between peer Media Gateway Controllers by encapsulating them using ^a ~~the~~ Network Service Access Point (NSAP) addressing format.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the communications network is a telecommunications network in which the Call Control level is used to establish and control call connections between a calling party and a called party at the Bearer Control level.

3. A method according to claim 1, wherein the Media Gateways provide access to transport networks which extend between peer Media Gateways, and the networks using one of IP, AAL2, or ATM transmission mechanisms.

4. A method according to claim 1, wherein the format of the at least one address allocated to a Media Gateway is the format used by a transport network to which that Media Gateway provides access.

5. A communications system comprising:
a Call Control level comprising a plurality of Media Gateway Controllers; and
a Bearer Control level comprising a plurality of Media Gateways each of which is controlled by a Media Gateway Controller and each of which is allocated at least one address which address corresponds to one of a plurality of different addressing formats,
wherein said peer Media Gateway Controllers are arranged to communicate Media Gateway addresses by encapsulating them using ^a ~~the~~ Network Service Access Point (NSAP) addressing format.

6. A Media Gateway Controller of a communications system, the Media Gateway Controller comprising:

a means for communicating with at least one Media Gateway ~~Controller~~ ^{Media Gateway} for the purpose of establishing and controlling call connections over a transport network to which the ~~Media Gateway~~ is coupled, the media gateway being allocated at least one address which address corresponds to one of a plurality of different addressing formats; and

a means for communicating with at least one peer Media Gateway Controller using a Bearer Independent Call Control (BICC) protocol, the BICC protocol conveying Media Gateway addresses by encapsulating them using ~~the~~ ^a Network Service Access Point (NSAP) addressing format.